



2014

# Swain County Health Department Strategic Plan



Sara Peterson

Swain County Health Department

3/1/2014

# **SWAIN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN**

**2014-2017**

## **1. Executive Summary**

### **Mission**

The Mission of the Swain County Health Department is to provide compassionate, individualized quality health care by a caring professional staff, specifically trained to meet the special health care needs of all our citizens and to continually monitor, anticipate, and respond to community health problems with emphasis on health promotion, disease prevention and accessibility.

### **Vision**

Swain County Health Department will be a trusted leader, advocate and partner with the community to prevent risks and promote public health.

### **Values**

**Integrity** - We are committed to treating all people honestly and fairly, with dignity and respect. Our community values our abundant natural resources, including clean air, land, water and we appreciate the economic opportunity derived from it. We also appreciate the open spaces and the recreational opportunities it provides, encouraging people of all ages to enjoy the activities our resources provide.

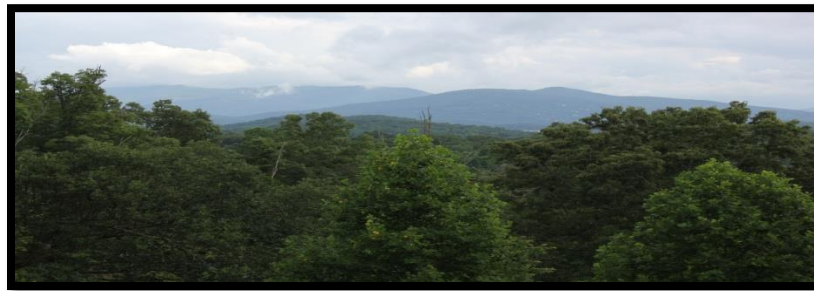
**Accountability** - We are committed to fiscal and program accountability and evaluating our performance in terms of benefit to the public. We continually explore avenues to know our community needs and develop action outcomes. The governing authorities are expected to exercise their responsibilities in an equitable manner that assures all residents are provided the rights and services to which they are legally entitled to.

**Excellence** - We strive for excellence in services to our customers and in leadership throughout the public health system. Our community promotes improved health for all

residents through reoccurring assessment of our local public health system and the implementation of specific goals related to identified needs, i.e., worksite wellness programs, improved school health outcomes, community design that encourages safety and physical activity and the knowledge and empowerment to improve nutrition.

**Teamwork** – We are committed to working collaboratively with others to enhance public health services for our residents and our communities. Our residents should be equipped with the knowledge, education and means to adopt healthy behaviors and lifestyles, with all having access to quality, affordable medical care.

**Responsiveness** - We are committed to a strong, professional, responsive public health system that meets the challenges of promoting and protecting the public's health and adapts to a rapidly changing environment.



## **Executive Summary**

The Swain County Health Department, along with key community partners are engaged in identifying and addressing local issues and concerns affecting Public/Community Health. This will be achieved through collaboration with community partners, while not representative of the entire scope of health department business; rather, it reflects areas of enhanced emphasis based upon documented need for change. It also includes specific plans for *action* to address each of the goals and objectives listed in the following pages. These actions or activities are measurable and will relate directly to the goals and objectives listed. While the goals and objectives will remain constant over the next planning cycle, the action points will be reviewed and modified as needed on an annual basis with the County Commissioners, Swain Hospital, WNC Healthy Impact, School Health Advisory Board, Health Department staff, and other stakeholders.

The process<sup>1</sup> started in 2012 with a community assessment survey followed by analysis of the primary and secondary data. This data revealed several concerns which are listed below:

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Illegal and prescription drug abuse
4. Lack of employment
5. Teen Pregnancy
6. Access to care
7. Mental Health issues

The priority setting process<sup>2</sup> determined the top 3 health priorities to be addressed to be:

1. Tobacco Use
2. Obesity



Our focus is prevention of the CHRONIC diseases these health determinants relate to.

In this strategic plan, the focus will be on addressing the top two health concerns and secondarily on overall community issues. Our goal is to ensure that the citizens of Swain County become healthier by receiving education, knowledge, and necessary policy and environmental changes that will positively impact their ability to make positive healthy lifestyle choices.

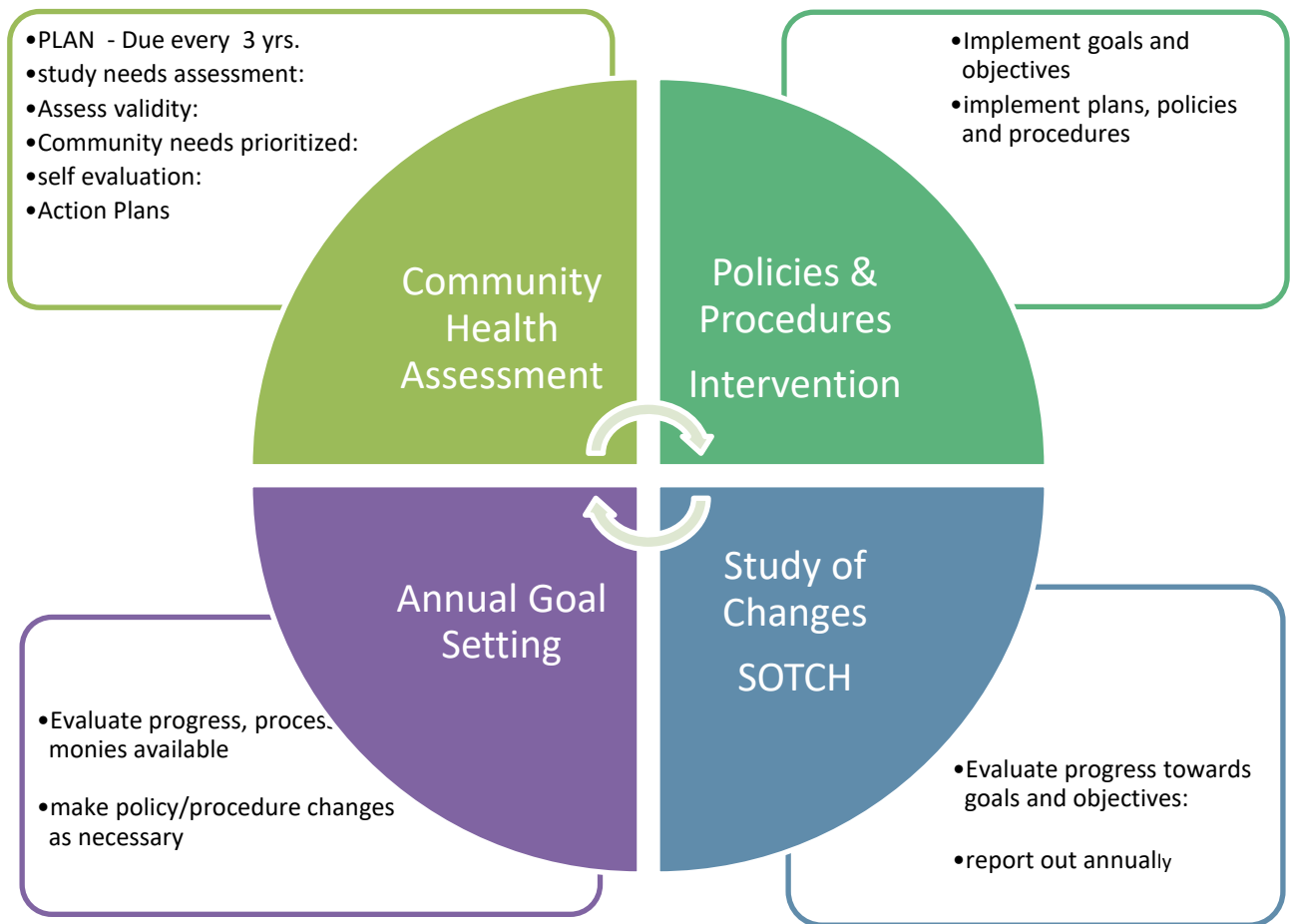
The charts on the following pages indicate the workflow in terms of addressing identified community issues. We also hope to achieve targeted improvements in public health outcomes by using this strategic plan, and identifying winnable battles while continuing to partner with key stakeholders

---

<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup>

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



The strategic planning team used a methodical approach to creating an outcome based strategic plan for the health department to contribute towards a healthier community.

Planning began with identifying Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. We began by gathering information from staff, clients and from community partners. The goal was to create a plan that would result in the development of outcome driven program activities. Theoretically this will lead to the achievement of the goals and objectives as outlined, derived from the community health assessment.

## ***SWOT ANALYSIS***

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Has been successfully accredited 2006, 2011</li> <li>✓ Credible Community status</li> <li>✓ Positive relationship with the community and school system in health education programs.</li> <li>✓ Close proximity to hospital facilities</li> <li>✓ Ability to set and achieve goals</li> <li>✓ Dedicated staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Turnover in staff</li> <li>✓ Tax base low, 86% land owned by state or federal government</li> <li>✓ Inability to provide competitive salary to employee</li> <li>✓ Internal communication is not as smooth or timely as possible</li> <li>✓ Inexperienced staff</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Grants and projects</li> <li>✓ Positive and successful outcomes promoting desirous joint endeavors with community partners</li> <li>✓ Swain County's outlook of a large elderly population creating an opportunity for visionary plans to serve this population.</li> <li>✓ Working with WNC Healthy Impact</li> <li>✓ Enhanced collaborations with community partners</li> <li>✓ Technology- social media, IT solutions to facilitate communication, data, and efficiencies</li> <li>✓ New leadership – Health Director, consolidation of Health &amp; Human Services, County Health Board is advisory, County Commissioner's governing body</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Financial resources unable to keep up with demanding requirements</li> <li>✓ Budget cuts (Medicaid reimbursements)</li> <li>✓ Meeting the needs of the growing elderly population</li> <li>✓ Obama Care</li> <li>✓ Ongoing funding cuts negatively impacting effectiveness</li> <li>✓ Loss of staff</li> <li>✓ Changes in state mandates</li> <li>✓ Consolidation</li> <li>✓ Electronic Health Records</li> <li>✓</li> </ul>

## **GOALS STRATEGIES**

- Goal I. Swain County Health Department will retain accreditation status by 2016.
  - Objective 1. The Swain County Health Department staff will complete all of requirements necessary as stated by the North Carolina Public health accreditation Board by October 2015.
  
- Goal II. Monitor Swain County's health status to identify community health problems/concerns annually by the Health Educator and other staff and report findings by March of the corresponding year.
  - Objective 1. By 3/2016 the Community Health Assessment for 2015 will be submitted.
    - Continue to promote environmental and policy changes in the community to promote healthy lifestyle choices.
  
  - Objective 2. The SOTCH Report will be completed and turned in to the Department of Health and Human Services by the Health Educator by March 2015, 2016, and 2017.
    - Strategy 1. Review and document progress toward goals set in the Three year community health assessment process.
    - Strategy 2. Identify changes that effect the community climate relating to scope of practice of the Swain County Health Department
    - Strategy 3. Attend workshops, conferences, and webinars to enhance knowledge of state strategies that can be implemented locally.

## Priority #1 TOBACCO USE ANALYSIS

The effects of smoking are serious. It can harm nearly every organ of the body. It causes nearly one of every five deaths in the United States each year.

**Is smoking a risk factor for autoimmune diseases?.....YES**  
**Does smoking affect my bones?..... YES**  
**Does smoking affect my heart and blood vessels?.....YES**  
**Does smoking affect my lungs and breathing?.....YES**  
**Can smoking affect my vision?..... YES**  
**Do cigarettes cause cancer?.....YES**  
**Do light cigarettes cause cancer?..... YES**  
**Do menthol cigarettes cause cancer?..... YES**  
**Can smoking cigars and pipes cause cancer?.....YES**

An estimated 13,000 North Carolinians aged 35 years or older died from a smoking-related cause each year during 2005-2009. North Carolina has the 14th highest in the nation. Although overall smoking rates among adults in the state have dropped in the past decade, North Carolina still lags behind the national average. (NC Institute of Medicine. Healthy North Carolina 2020: A Better State of Health.)

Tobacco use is the #1 cause of preventable death in the United States, killing more than 440,000 Americans each year. It is also the leading cause of preventable death in North Carolina, and is primarily responsible for numerous deadly cancers and debilitating illnesses. Despite these facts, thousands of kids in our state take up tobacco use each year. And according to North Carolina's 2005 Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS), the vast majority (82%) of NC students who have ever smoked tried their first cigarette before the age of 15.

Evidence shows that comprehensive school-based programs, combined with community and mass-marketing efforts, can effectively prevent or postpone the onset of youth smoking.

In Swain County, 70.5 % of all deaths between 2006 and 2010 can be attributed to lung cancer. Chronic lower respiratory disease mortality trend data is higher than regional and state data. We must continue educating and promoting tobacco free environments, with all the research showing that tobacco is the direct cause for so much illness.

➤ Tobacco use is the #1 cause of preventable death in the United States.

▪ Tobacco is a leafy plant grown around the world. In 2007, four countries—China, Brazil, India, and the United States—produced two-thirds of the world's tobacco. Tobacco is currently grown in 16 states in the United States. The largest tobacco-producing states are Kentucky and **North Carolina**. They account for **71%** of all tobacco grown in the United States.

▪ Tobacco is an addictive substance because it contains the chemical nicotine. Like heroin or cocaine, nicotine changes the way your brain works and causes you to crave more and more nicotine. This addiction to nicotine is what makes it so difficult to quit smoking and other tobacco.

▪ "In **September 1935**, Fortune Magazine published a discussion of the medical implications of smoking. It concluded that this much can be said:

***"The possible benefit to be derived from tobacco is always less than the possible harm"***  
***(Robert, 1949:256)***



## TOBACCO ACTION PLAN

### TOBACCO-FREE LIVING

#### Vision of Impact

Healthier Swain County citizens,  
by increasing tobacco free  
environments and decreasing the  
use of tobacco through education,  
and policy change.



## TOBACCO

### SWAIN COUNTY OBJECTIVES

#### **Intervention: Advocate for continued funding for TRU Coordinator in schools**

SETTING: Swain County School System

START DATE – END DATE: 2012 – ongoing – As of 2014 no funds has been available to continue TRU activities within the school system.

LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Change in policy; youth

LEAD AGENCY: Swain County Health Department

OTHER AGENCIES: Schools, Hi-Top Assist, Hospital

EVALUATION MEASURES: Continued support of TRU group, youth participation in TRU activity, and active engagement of youth in tobacco use prevention imitative.

PROCESS: Discuss with schools possibility of continued support of staff person trained to lead TRU groups and desirability of having TRU Coordinator in schools; advocate for state funding for TRU Coordinator; if necessary, train Staff as TRU leader

OUTPUT/IMPACT: reduction in youth tobacco use

HEALTH/SAFETY OUTCOMES: Comprehensive, sustained multi-component programs can cut youth tobacco use in half in 6 years. Prevention is critical. Successful multi-component programs prevent young people from starting to use tobacco in the first place and more than pay for themselves in lives and health care dollars saved. Strategies that comprise successful comprehensive tobacco control programs include mass media campaigns, higher tobacco prices, smoke-free laws and policies, evidence-based school programs, and sustained community-wide efforts. Comprehensive tobacco control programs are most effective when funding for them is sustained at levels recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

**INTERVENTION: Increase tobacco-free environments for government grounds, including parks and recreational areas**

SETTING: Community

START DATE – END DATE: Continued June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2016

2014 continuing to promote the policy change for tobacco free parks and recreation facility. Signage and receptacles are available.

LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Change in policy

EVALUATION MEASURES: This intervention is new.

PROCESS: Raise awareness about tobacco-free issues through use of media, consistent messaging; create educational tools based on the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch smoke free implementation tool kit and inventory; continue to engage partners; explore options for county process; build community support; implement policy; provide smoking receptacles and signage; promote policy change throughout the community

Output/Impact: development of media plan and educational tools; completion of interviews and analysis of interview results; identification of county process; documented community interest in task; successful policy implementation; placement of receptacles and signage; community awareness

SETTING: Community

START DATE – END DATE: June 1, 2013 – May 31, 2014

LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Change in community

HEALTH/SAFETY OUTCOMES: Tobacco free policies in community and town

LEAD AGENCY: Swain County Health Department

OTHER AGENCIES: Community Transformation Grant Project, Med-West, Hi-Top Assist

EVALUATION MEASURES: This intervention is new.

PROCESS: contract with individual to create inventory of available health resources in clinical preventive resources

OUTPUT/IMPACT: development of metrics and process; completion of assessment

HEALTH/SAFETY OUTCOMES: Increase the number of community organizations offering supports for individuals identified with tobacco use

## PRIORITY # 2: OBESITY

### Situational Analysis



**“Overweight and obese adults are at increased risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoarthritis, and several forms of cancer resulting in reduced quality of life, and premature death (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).**

**Physical activity and healthy eating are both critical parts of maintaining good health. Everyone, children and adults, benefits from being physically active and eating a variety of fresh, healthy foods every day.**

**Regular physical activity and good nutrition can reduce a person’s risk of obesity and chronic disease and may prevent certain health conditions from worsening over time.”**

Obesity affects everyone. Obesity is an American problem. It is also a Swain County problem. Obesity affects our families, schools, and businesses, and it threatens our economy. Obesity is a health concern, a social dilemma, a personal challenge, an economic burden, and a policy issue.

The obesity crisis harms some segments of society more than others, but this problem crosses all lines of ethnicity, race, socioeconomic class, gender, age, and ability. The primary concern related to overweight and obesity is the health risks they pose. Overweight and obesity increases the risk of chronic disease, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some forms of cancer. The high rates of overweight and obesity in our county, state, and nation decrease in life expectancy, productivity, and quality of life.

Swain County statistics, from County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, reported Swain County in the 90th percentile, meaning only 10 counties were below this point in the rankings.

The County rankings are derived from health behaviors, clinical care, social economic factors and physical environment. These county health rankings are to show what we can do to create healthier places to live. In the quest of a healthier Swain County, leaders look at such areas as: improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables

- Creating an environment that is conducive to walking, hiking, biking and getting physical exercise in general.

In Swain County we have incorporated many projects and interventions to increase physical activity and healthier eating.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – NUTRITION - HEALTHY PEOPLE

### Vision of Impact

Swain County is a place where people can eat smart and move more, by improved access to physical activity and healthy foods and increased quality of living



## OBESITY: SWAIN COUNTY OBJECTIVES

### **INTERVENTION: Promote research based 5-2-1-Almost None message in Swain County**

SETTING: Community

START DATE – END DATE: December 2014 – ongoing

LEAD AGENCY: Swain County Health Department. The Health Educator serves as the liaison to the School Health Advisory Committee and various committees/organizations throughout the community and region.

OTHER AGENCIES: Hospitals, the medical community, schools, families, child care providers, government agencies, businesses, parks and recreation can promote the message

EVALUATION MEASURES: New intervention

PROCESS: Assist in developing a tool kit for the 5-2-1-Almost None education initiative to raise awareness among children and caregivers of the recommendations that children should eat five or more fruits and vegetable per day; spend 2 hours or less per day on leisure screen time, engage in daily physical activity for at least one hour, and limit consumption of sugary drinks.

OUTPUT/IMPACT: WNC Healthy Kids and its stakeholders are prepared to assist the region in improving children and families' health by sharing 5-2-1 *Almost None* tools, strategies and ideas that each sector can use to assure that Western North Carolina reaches its healthy weight goals

HEALTH/SAFETY OUTCOMES: Research has shown that promoting a simple, unifying message, in

conjunction with community interventions, can empower entire communities to take clear and direct actions which will improve specific health outcomes.

**INTERVENTION: Increase the number of Swain County residents who have access to opportunities for active living**

SETTING: Community

START DATE – END DATE: **continued from** June 1, 2013 – December, 2016

LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Change in policy, environment, individual, family

LEAD AGENCY: Community Transformation Grant Project

OTHER AGENCIES: Swain County Health Department, Planning Departments, Southwest Commission (Region A Planning), Health Impact Assessment (HIA) contractor

EVALUATION MEASURES: This intervention is new.

PROCESS: engage planning departments; plan and implement a public health professional and planner professional development workshop; raise awareness about active living issues and initiative through use of media, consistent messaging; create education tools to assist in planning efforts; complete an assessment of existing policies and plans; complete an evaluation of existing policies and plans; evaluate each comprehensive plan with regards to health to determine future actionable directions; complete public and stakeholder outreach through public input sessions; draft a health-specific element of a chapter or other materials related to documenting county specific public outreach; incorporate health elements into comprehensive plans as county process dictates

OUTPUT/IMPACT: increase the number of new or revised comprehensive plans that include health considerations; workshop implementation; development of educational tools; completion of assessment with county specific considerations;

HEALTH/SAFETY OUTCOMES: Engaging in regular physical activity is one of the most important things that people of all ages can do to improve their health.

**INTERVENTION: Diabetes Education through Endocrinology Support Services**

SETTING: Individual

START DATE 2013 – END DATE: Ongoing

2014 – The extensive grant process with Kaye B. Reynolds foundation was passed on to NC State Department of Health & Human Services. The local endeavor will proceed without the endocrinology support at this time. The endeavor will be entirely local with partnership of Swain Hospital and Local physicians.

LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Change in individual
<p>LEAD AGENCY: Med-West</p> <p>OTHER AGENCIES: Swain County Health Department, physicians, Western Carolina University, Kate B. Reynolds, additional Far West Health Departments</p>
<p>EVALUATION MEASURES: This intervention is ongoing but not reported before</p> <p>PROCESS: A physician's referral form will be required to receive services.</p>
OUTPUT/IMPACT: The Kate B. Reynolds planning grant is intended to facilitate the planning and recruitment process of an Endocrinologist that will lead a program which provides diabetes education and endocrinology support services through the Health Department in each Far West County.
HEALTH/SAFETY OUTCOMES: The evidence is strong that the American College of Endocrinology (ACE) Guidelines for the management of diabetes provide a thorough framework of clinical and lifestyle guidance for the long-term successful management of Type II diabetes.
<b>INTERVENTION: Appalachian Care Medical Mission</b>
<p>LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Change in individual</p> <p>2014 – The mission was held in June 2014 and was evaluated as a great success. There was a 2 year planning period with the Department of Defense and the Appalachian Regional Commission and Murphy Medical Center.</p>
<p>LEAD AGENCY: Swain County Health Department</p> <p>OTHER AGENCIES: US Department of Defense, Med-West, physicians, dentists, Swain County Government</p>
<p>EVALUATION MEASURES: This is a new intervention</p> <p>OUTPUT/IMPACT: The United States Department of Defense is staging an extended chronic disease and episodic care clinical intervention in the Spring of 2014 as part of their staff training and readiness. The Medical Mission is intended to identify and initiate a medical care plan for the under-served population of the community.</p>
<b>INTERVENTION: Increase the number of Swain County residents with access to fresh fruits and vegetables through farmers markets, tail gate markets, and road side stands.</b>
<p>SETTING: Community</p> <p>START DATE - END DATE: Continued - June 1, 2013 – October 2016</p> <p>2014- Tailgate market is in place, roadside stands and market vendors have been interviewed; a flier has been made listing all markets across the region. Signage has been delivered to markets</p>



that qualified.
LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Change in environment
<p>LEAD AGENCY: Community Transformation Grant Project</p> <p>OTHER AGENCIES: Swain County Health Department, Western Carolina University Professors and Students, State Staff, Media, WNC Food Policy Council, ASAP, Cooperative Extension, Chamber of Commerce, Businesses.</p>
<p>EVALUATION MEASURES: This intervention is new.</p> <p>PROCESS: raise awareness about healthy eating issues and initiatives through use of media and consistent messaging; advocate for vendors to accept and use supplies to facilitate ability to sell/market fresh fruits and vegetables; work with WCU Nutrition Department to gather data on consumer perspective on fresh fruits and vegetables; create or use existing implementation and marketing plan to assist local vendors</p>
<p>Output/Impact: development of a media plan and educational tools; completion of data collection and analysis; creation of implementation and marketing plans; assess business owners and neighborhoods; identification of pilot participants; initiation of pilot sites; evaluation report; dissemination of evaluations; identify future or continued participants</p> <p>Health/Safety Outcomes: increase the number of farmers markets, tail gate markets and road side stands selling fresh fruits and vegetables to the community.</p>
<b>INTERVENTION: Continue health interventions in schools facilitated through School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)</b>
<p>SETTING: Schools</p> <p>START DATE – END DATE: On-going</p>
<p>LEVEL OF INTERVENTION: Individual and individual school policy</p> <p>LEAD AGENCY: Swain County School System</p> <p>OTHER AGENCIES: Swain County Health Department, Med-West</p>
<p>EVALUATION MEASURES: collection of screening data through school health initiatives</p> <p>PROCESS: Assessments, education initiatives, and outreach occur throughout the school year</p>
<p>OUTPUT/IMPACT: A variety of outcomes are achieved throughout the year to include the support of a comprehensive health policy for the Swain County School System, K-5 BMI assessment and documentation, The Healthy Party Policy, Health Awareness education initiatives targeted at 4<sup>th</sup> grade and high school students, on-going nutrition education and advocacy, and the elementary school Walk-and-Talk Program.</p>



HEALTH/SAFETY OUTCOMES: Students will attend classes in a health conscious environment and receive necessary referrals to address health issues.

### **Additional Objectives Added since SOTCH 2014**

- Beginning May 2015 – Diabetes Prevention Program will be incorporated into prevention class schedule at Swain County Health Department. (Background data- 111 new cases of diabetes diagnosed in Swain County)
- Coalition for a Drug Free Swain County has been re-established. Lead Agency Swain County Health Department. Opportunity to address drug related concerns by receiving a grant from Project Lazarus November 2014.
- Mental Health First Aid classes are being offered by Swain County Health Department. (Suicide rate doubled in 2013) These classes are offered regionally. Grant received for to pay for tuition and cost of classes.
- 5-2-1 Almost None is being promoted with greater emphasis (Nutrition education for 4<sup>th</sup> grade targeted students). A grant was received from WNC Healthy Network. April 2015
- Walking group established in coordination with Swain Hospital. January 2015 – Ongoing
- Lunch & Learn Series – Series focus is on healthy lifestyle. This activity is in coordination with Swain Hospital
- BMI's are collected of elementary school students in coordination with Swain County Schools.
- Worksite wellness strategic program has started 2014 within Swain County Schools

These activities will be evaluated and studied during the priority selection process in the 2015 CHA process.

## **CONCLUSION:**

In order to solicit community input to the Strategic Plan, the plan will be made available on the Swain County Health Department Website ([www.swaincountync.gov](http://www.swaincountync.gov)) and announced in the local newspaper.

Copies of the Strategic Plan will be available at the Health Department. Recognizing that a strategic plan provides a sense of direction, also recognizing the need to remain flexible to changing needs and requirements, the plan will be reviewed and updated annually by the health department staff and the Board of County Commissioners

## Appendices:

<sup>i</sup> The top health priorities issues to address were reached by using the following criteria based on primary and secondary data presented.

- The problem affects a lot of Swain County residents – including low income and underserved residents.
- More resources are needed for this issue; it is not being sufficiently addressed by existing programs.
- There's a good chance that the problem could be reduced if local groups were dedicated to working on it.
- It will be beneficial to use a collaborative approach involving a variety of community stakeholders in addressing this issue.

---

ii

CHA Schedule: 2012, 2015, 2018,  
SOTCH 2013, 2014, 2015 Strategic Plan 2014-2016

# X

---

Phillip Carson  
Chairman, Board of Commissioners